

REMARKS

Claims 3-8, 11, 13-22, 25, and 27 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34 are canceled, and claims 3, 11, 25, and 27 are amended for the Examiner's consideration. The amendments do not introduce any new matter, and are supported by the claims as originally filed. Reconsideration in view of the amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Amendment is Proper for Entry

Applicants submit that this amendment places the application in condition for allowance by canceling finally rejected claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34, and presenting all pending claims in allowable form. Thus, the amendment does not raise any new issues that would require further search and/or consideration. Therefore, entry of this amendment is proper.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 13-22 are allowed. Applicants also appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 3-8, 11, 25 and 27 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if presented in independent form. By this amendment, claims 3, 11, 25 and 27 are re-written in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Moreover, as claims 4-8 depend from now allowable independent claim 3, these claims, too, should be allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are Moot

Applicants submit that, by the present amendment, the rejection of claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is moot.

While Applicants do not acquiesce that any proper combination of the applied documents of record renders unpatentable the combination of features recited in claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34, in an effort to advance prosecution, Applicants have canceled these claims. However, Applicants reserve the right to refile the subject matter of original claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34 in one or more continuation applications.

Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner indicate that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 26, and 28-34 is now moot, and that all pending claims are allowable.

Claim Objections

Claim 31 was objected to for being a substantial duplicate of claim 12. By this amendment, claims 12 and 31 are canceled and the objection is rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants request that the objection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,
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